DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 434 303 CS 013 646

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TITLE Reading across the Curriculum.
PUB DATE 1999-08-19
NOTE 7p.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Class Activities; *Content Area Reading; Elementa / Education; Inservice Teacher Education; Learning Activities; *Reading Skills; *Reading Strategies; Staff Development; Student Educational Objectives
IDENTIFIERS *Reading Across the Curriculum

ABSTRACT

Few teachers set objectives for pupils to achieve when reading across the curriculum is implemented. Teachers in academic disciplines need to participate in staff development programs or inservice teacher education to be instructors of reading. Skills emphasized in staff development need to be tried out in the classroom and feedback should be secured to make necessary modifications in teaching. What to emphasize and how to make reading enjoyable by developing background information directly related to what will be read are important, as are readiness activities. After a reading activity has been completed, discussion should follow. Pupils individually/cooperatively may undertake follow up activities (based on subject matter comprehended), such as: make a collage; develop a model; engage in construction activities; dramatize selected situations; make a vocabulary game; take part in a debate; and summarize ideas using a personal computer. Reading subject matter involves comprehending the vital facts, concepts, and generalizations. (NKA)

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ED 434 303

Reading Across the Curriculum

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Published

1999-08-19

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READING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Reading across the curriculum has been a slogan for some time. The slogan is meant to improve reading skills of pupils. Reading generally is emphasized in most academic disciplines. One problem that has received scant attention pertains to what should be stated as objectives for pupils to achieve when reading across the curriculum is implemented. A very detailed set of skills could be listed as objectives. Many teachers, however, lack the skills and do not wish to be a teacher of reading in the academic discipline taught (1).

Which skills in reading should then be taught?

Reading Skills Across the Curriculum

Teachers in academic disciplines need to receive staff development programs in order to be teachers of reading. Skills emphasized in staff development need to be tried out in the classroom and feedback secured to make necessary modifications in teaching.

Inservice programs need to stress what is:

1. relevant in the teaching of reading.
2. meaningful to participants.
3. purposeful in implementation of ideas in the classroom.
4. useful and practical in assisting pupils with problems in reading.
5. interesting so that the attention of learners might be secured (2).

To follow the above criteria in staff development, which skills should teachers acquire in all curriculum areas taught? Each skill stressed in inservice education should be taught as individual needs of pupils are revealed.

1. Phonics should be taught as needed to a pupil. Initial, medial, and final consonants/vowels should be taught, if needed. Phonics should not be taught for the sake of doing so, nor for busy work. At the specific time when a pupil cannot identify a word, phonics needs to be stressed.
2. Context clues should be emphasized prior to phonics instruction. If a pupil does not recognize a word, the teacher needs to have the learner attempt identification based on the other words in the sentence. There are pupils who do not attempt using context clues. Independence, not dependence upon others, must be encouraged in reading.
3. Some young children need assistance in using illustrations to identify unknown words. There tend to be numerous illustrations in books written for primary grade pupils. These are valuable to provide clues for word recognition.
4. Pupils need to realize that individuals read to attach meaning to subject matter. There are pupils who may have "read" content, but not comprehended/remembered the subject matter. They need help in realizing that ideas read must be understood and meaningful. Use needs to be made of content read such as in discussions, reports, and oral/written communication.
5. Ultimately, higher levels of cognition must be encouraged from a reading activity, such as in critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving.

Making Reading Enjoyable

Pupils need to be assisted in developing background information directly related

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to what will be read. The background information should be motivating and interesting. Audio-visual aids may/should be used here. The ideas presented should capture learner attention and encourage reading across the curriculum. These audio-visual materials then need to pertain to what will be read in the academic area being pursued. The teacher, at this point, might print new words that pupils will meet in print (3).

Inherent with stimulating activities to provide adequate readiness, the teacher needs to print in neat manuscript letters the words that could make for difficulties in identification. Learners may then see the new words in print and be aided to identify these, when being engaged in reading. I would suggest, too, that pupils should provide meaning for each word by using it in a sentence (4).

With the readiness activities and the inherent recognition experiences, pupils need encouragement to identify problems and questions. The problems/questions provide motivation for reading. Subject matter read might then relate directly to developing hypotheses and answers.

After the reading activity has been completed, a lively discussion should follow. The discussion might zero in on the problems/questions identified. Brain storming may be used to generate possibilities. Pupils, too, may have additional queries covering content read. Learner curiosity and interest are vital in sustaining purpose in reading.

There are fascinating experiences for pupils individually/cooperatively as follow up activities. Based on subject matter comprehended, pupils may:

1. Make a collage.
2. Develop a model.

3. Engage in construction activities.

4. Read library books related to the same/similar title or by the same author.

5. Dramatize selected situations.

6. Role play portions of the content read.

7. Make a vocabulary game.

8. Take part in a debate.

9. Write a play to implement in the classroom.

10. Summarize ideas using the personal computer.

Conclusion

Reading proficiently in all academic areas is vital. Time is wasted in reading content when meaning and understanding is lacking. Reading subject matter involves comprehending the vital facts, concepts, and generalizations. Use and application needs to be made of ideas acquired. To comprehend, word recognition skills need to be taught so that learners become independent in word recognition. Pupils need to identify vital words so that comprehension of subject matter is an end result.

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